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ABSTRACT

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THIS DOCUMENT: Choosing the textbook for an introductory course can be a frustrating, haphazard, and time-consuming process. This year, members of the sociology department at Mercy College tried a selection process that eliminated at least the first two of those three problems. To begin, the department sent letters to all companies that publish introductory sociology textbooks, inviting them to come to the campus and give a presentation on the merits of their texts. They were also asked to forward a review copy for each member of the department. "We told the publishers that the book selected would be used for the next two years in all sections, thus representing a significant sale," says Mary C. Kraetzer, professor of sociology. Faculty members had two weeks to review each text. The department scheduled a Saturday meeting with publishers' representatives, who made 10-minute presentations on behalf of their texts, then answered questions. In addition, some representatives met with individual faculty members before the presentations, "thus enabling the reps to respond to particular faculty interests and provide books for consideration in specialty courses," Ms. Kraetzer says. After a luncheon with the publishers' representatives, the faculty members met to make a decision. This year, 15 books were under consideration. To make an initial cut, faculty members were asked to submit a list of from one to five choices. The group agreed to drop from consideration any books having only one or two votes. A second cut pared the list to five texts. The third vote produced a clear choice. Although the process was time consuming, Ms. Kraetzer says, "it engendered a systematic and thorough effort and proved satisfactory to faculty and publishers' representatives alike." As an added benefit, she says, it provided for "a serious examination of alternative texts." For more information, contact Mary C. Kraetzer, professor of sociology, Mercy College, 555 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. 10522. (Author)

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IDEAS

By Zoë Ingalls

■ Mercy College's sociology department tries new way to select textbooks

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For more information, contact Mary C. Kraetzer, professor of sociology, Mercy College, 555 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, N. Y. 10522.

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